

THE F.W.U.I. AND S.F.W.P.

UNION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Workers' Union of Ireland was founded by Jim Larkin. When Larkin returned from America in 1923, after serving 30 months of a 10-year sentence on a charge of 'criminal anarchy', he found himself in conflict with the leaders of the I.T.G.W.U. This row turned into a battle royal and as a result a breakaway union was formed, the Workers' Union of Ireland. The backbone of the union at the beginning, was the Dublin workers, especially the carters, dockers and coal workers who had followed Larkin before and after the great lockout of 1913.

Larkin was a communist at this period (the early twenties), and as a result of his influence the union was affiliated to the R.I.L.U. (the Red International of Labour Unions). The union had, therefore, a radical birth and baptism.

Today the union is Ireland's second biggest union. The general secretary is Paddy Cardiff, who succeeded Denis Larkin some years ago, bringing to an end the reign of the Larkins who had successively led the union, since the death of Big Jim. (Denis Larkin had become general secretary on the death of his brother, Jim Larkin Junior.)

The union, therefore, has a history with a dash of colour. The biggest increase in the union's membership in recent times took place when the Federation of Rural Workers came under its umbrella and it was retitled The Federated Workers Union of Ireland.

The 1980 annual conference of the union came and went. But not without event. There were some radical murmurs amongst the members who showed a certain independence and an unwillingness to be led on a number of issues. On a resolution on Northern Ireland the general secretary was outvoted by two to one. Another and more interesting development was that two S.F.W.P. members of the executive lost their places.

THE S.F.W.P.

This paper has devoted the occasional column to the S.F.W.P. Some might ask why it is that this party is worthy of interest. S.F.W.P. claims to be the major party of the Irish left, with an alleged registered membership of 2,000 and about 3,000 associate members. One of the party's papers *The Irish People* claims to have a circulation of 25,000, a considerable readership. In the last edition S.F.W.P. contested 14 constituencies, including East Limerick, and next time around the party hopes to field up to 20 candidates, on each of which they expect to spend about £5,000. It hopes to have at least one deputy, Joe Sherlock, in Dail Eireann and has hopes of doing well in a number of other constituencies. The party has good candidates in Wicklow and in Waterford where Paddy Gallagher polled 4,500 in 1977. Add to this a large number of policy documents, a theoretical journal, *Teoric*, research papers, regular seminars and one or two films and you have a credible organisation, by any standard. If you spice the dish with a dash of conspiratorial republicanism, with underground cumainn made up of mysterious intellectuals (who are never identified), a private reserve army, which S.F.W.P. claims does not exist, and a mind-boggling mass of contradictions between the word and the deed, between public knowledge and party propanganda, it is hard to resist the temptation to examine the feast on offer.

One of the stories that serves to illustrate the contradictions of S.F.W.P. is told against the leader of the party, Tomas MacGiolla, a man widely respected in Irish politics. The story goes that Joe Stagg, a brother of Frank

Stagg, went to Tom McGill in an attempt to sort out problems concerning recreational time for political prisoners in Portlaoise prison involving the I.R.S.P., the Official I.R.A. and Eddie Gallagher's gang. The president of S.F.W.P. received and listened to Staff with great courtesy and attention as he explained in detail the finer points of the problem and how that the Official I.R.A. prisoners were acting under orders from the outside. Eventually there was a pause in Stagg's long monologue, at which point Tomas MacGiolla said to his astonished visitor: "But we have no political prisoners".

A Belfast city councillor of the S.F.W.P. dismissed 19 political prisoners in Long Kesh with the same words in a recent interview with a woman journalist writing a series for one of the national dailies.

It is this double-think, the breakdown in logic, the political schizophrenia of republicanism and socialism that invite attention and study.

S.F.W.P. drops into its party policies some hardline ideological nuggets: 'There cannot be a free press in a capitalist world when its survival depends on advertising'. This line is currently one of its strong ideological planks.

But it must be emphasised that policies and lines change at least with the frequency of the seasons. (A good S.F.W.P. member should keep in weekly contact with Gardiner Place to check the correctness of his line). On the basis of this policy it supports the right (?) of newspaper editors and controllers of the media to censor. The logic of this attitude seems to be that if there can't be freedom of the press then one should support censorship.

The logic is impeccable. It also follows that one who believes in or fight for greater freedom of the press in capitalist society are either ultra-leftists (anarchists, Trots - the usual ragbag) or benighted visionaries. In either case extremely dangerous people with dangerous ideas and not to be supported.

This belief is, of course, a gross simplification of something that is complex. Not only is the line wrong but it is totally unacceptable to the vast majority of people in any social democratic Western European state.

The capitalist press protects the state against individuals or groups who would through their writings or use of the media undermine, or in any way cause people to seriously question, the principals on which the structure of the state rests. This is understandable. No state will allow itself to be knowingly undermined and toppled.

The power of advertising reflects the power of capital. The capitalist state is by definition a state that encourages and protects the capitalist. It therefore safeguards him from attack.

This is the argument in its stark form, the form it often takes with S.F.W.P. But this is only half the story. Within the past hundred years freedom of the press and freedom of speech have been fought for and won in Western Europe and in the U.S., the biggest capitalist country of all. This has meant that the ordinary people have a right to information and a right to criticize their rulers, governmental decisions and the very structures of the state. These are the hallmarks of parliamentary democracy: freedom of thought, freedom of speech, the right to discussion and debate. These issues have been fought for and won over the years. They are gradualist gains fought for over centuries.

The roots of English parliamentary democracy go back to the first half of the seventeenth century. It was

Cromwell who won for the gentlemen farmers and the gentry a parliament and a say in the running of the country against the royalists who supported the divine right of the king to rule his subjects.

Even this country which has a brief and not very illustrious democratic tradition allows a very definite freedom to political parties and groups hostile to the state and the status quo. Provisional Sinn Fein and the I.R.S.P. advocate violence to topple the Northern and Southern states and have the right to publish and sell their own newspapers, to organize and hold public meetings. Then there is the Irish left. Most parties and groups have papers which publicise their policies and ideas generally critical of the state and the government.

With regard to the national press we are probably about to enter a period when exposes and investigative journalism will become popular, stimulated by the Magill articles on the Arms Crisis. Nor indeed can the national papers be always faulted, even the ones that seem tightly nailed down will respond to their readership if there is a demand that a story be told. The greatest obstacle to a free flow of information and ideas in Irish society is not the power of advertisers but the gombeen mentality which encourages ignorance and admires wealth.

These freedoms then are cherished, having been long sought and often bitterly conceded. For a political group to fly in the face of the people by denying this is less than wise. Yet this is what is done. The S.F.W.P. deny that there is freedom of the press and support the censor. What they are really saying goes deeper than this. It is that in reality there never can be press freedom, for as supporters of a one-party system, S.F.W.P., if it comes to power, is hardly likely to grant to people a freedom they never had but simply thought they had.

This, of course, encompasses more than just freedom of the media; ultimately it takes in freedom of thought and extends to literature, painting and all the art forms. It reflects what one finds in Eastern European states. It is found in countries where parliamentary democracy as we know it never existed. To try to transfer and translate it into our society is simply not on. You cannot turn back the clock that way. People will not have taken from them rights they have been taught to cherish and safeguard. Political parties, or sects, that attempt to do this will be rejected by the people and cast aside. Party theoreticians, therefore, who propound such ideas in the back rooms of Gardiner Place are simply not in touch with the practical world of politics.

To come back to the F.W.U.I. conference. The No. 15 branch has always been a source of interest at W.U.I. get-togethers. Denis Larkin used to refer to its members as 'my intellectuals'. The delegation normally comprised of a large S.F.W.P. group circling around an R.T.E. producer, their chief intellectual and guru. Larkin was a great admirer of the guru's verbal fireworks and was known to regard him as 'a great entertainer' without whom an annual conference would not be complete. Larkin was a shrewd old boy who knew 'a hawk from a handsaw'.

But this year the S.F.W.P. was barely represented on the RTE delegation. There was just Eoghan Harris, John Cadden, the outgoing member of the executive, and Pat Brady, the branch secretary. It was a change from the times when a non-S.F.W.P. member would feel like Daniel among the lions.

In fact what had happened was that the general membership had risen more or less en masse and rejected the S.F.W.P. group for 'being anti-people', and for general unreliability. In their attempts to mark out for themselves the places of power in the semi-state bodies and in the unions their leading representatives had cynically presumed on the continued support of the workers. But the workers had reacted and cast them out.

The S.F.W.P. delegates at the F.W.U.I. conference kept a low profile for the most part, except when Eoghan Harris made a speech on women's rights. The contribution was well made and enjoyed.

The delegation's main hope must have been that Brian Higgins, the nominee of the branch would fail to be elected. Indeed, there had been a great hatcheting of left-wing delegates at head office where up to 15 nominees had been disqualified on a clatter of technicalities. In the event, Higgins was returned on the second count, defeating Peter Byrne, an old supporter of Paddy Cardiff, in the process.

So the Worker's Party people made their way home from the conference, temporarily chastened by their experience. There is a lesson to be learned from the affair. But have the S.W.F.P. delegates the humility and common sense to grasp that lesson?

SCRAP ARTICLES—2 & 3

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We believe: That the clear wish of the majority of people in Northern Ireland to remain citizens of the United Kingdom must be respected.

We declare: That socialists must accept the present state boundaries in Ireland as a basis for developing socialist politics. The call for a 32-county socialist Republic is nothing more than the old nationalism newly dressed in a socialist guise.

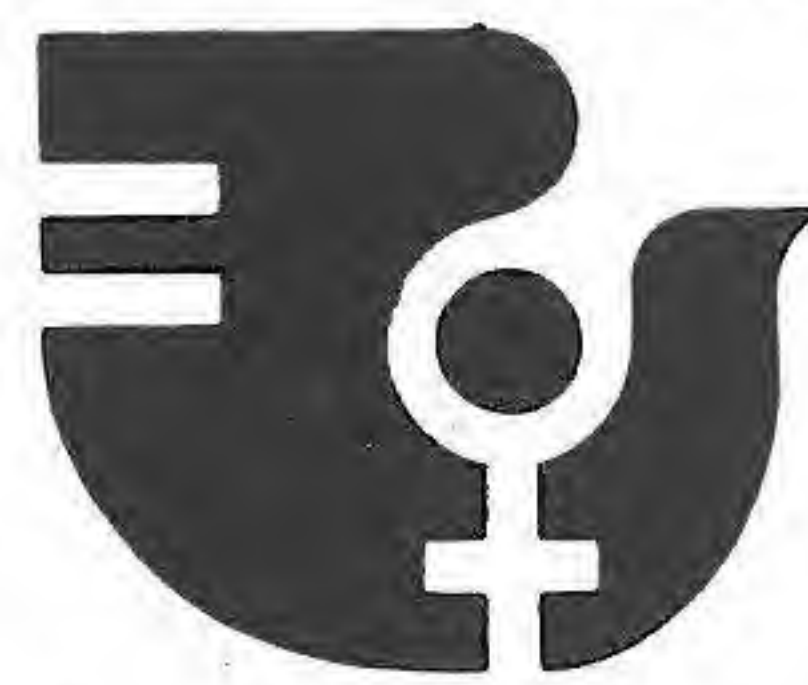
We oppose: The demand for the British Government to declare its intention to withdraw from Northern Ireland.

We demand: That the Government of the Republic should recognise as legitimate the present constitutional status of Northern Ireland. To this end we demand that Articles 2 and 3 of the Republic's Constitution, which lays claim to Northern Ireland's territory, be dropped. This is clearly required by the Helsinki Agreement, which was signed by the Republic in 1975.

Membership: Membership is open to all those who support our aims.

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THE DR. LONG STORY

THE SECOND ATTACK
BY "FATHER" TIERNEY

PART TWELVE

Few of my acquaintances cared to be seen speaking to me. I had become a notorious individual of such a bad type that no respectable person's character was safe for a moment in my company. On Friday evening, January 18th, I had a most interesting experience when, in company with my police escort, I paid a visit to a Protestant friend at the other side of the city. During my visit the house was surrounded by a large mob of women and young people from the neighbouring lanes, waiting to see the notorious Dr. Long come out again. The police advised me to escape by going out the back way, but I felt it would not be right to do this, and determined to go out by the front, trusting God to keep me from all harm. When I did go out my escort did all they could to prevent my being hurt by the showers of mud and stones which were thrown. There was much shouting and rushing as we passed along one side of the street, stones being thrown again and again from the other side, which smashed some of the shop windows at our side. I felt concerned for my police escort, who were struck several times.

One young woman, who had been a patient, rushed in between the crowd and myself with a child in her arms, saying: "They will not throw stones while I am beside you, doctor, for they would fear to hit the child". Seeing I had no fear she went home, and we quietly passed through the city, followed by a howling mob, whom the police were making every effort to restrain. In George Street I was struck in the back with several stones, but I was not hurt. I pitied the people, who I knew were misguided and did not at all realise what they were doing. At Wellesley Bridge the police drew a cordon across, and prevented the crowd from following further. The Limerick Leader, in reporting this incident, said: "Dr. Long was surrounded by a threatening crowd, who booed and groaned him to a considerable extent. He ran a great personal risk, and were it not that a large force of police assembled immediately, a serious state of things might have arisen".

On Sunday, January 27th, "Father" O'Donnell, Administrator of St. Michael's parish, of which Bishop O'Dwyer is the P.P., came to the support of "Father" Tierney, whose gun had made a great deal of noise, but had failed to hit the mark. He joined in the attack in a most deliberate and determined manner. Addressing St. Michael's Temperance Association, he said, referring to recent events: "If differences be accentuated now, it is not the fault of Catholics, but the fault of those who have become aggressive to the Catholics of the city ... Some of them are trying to spread the light by diplomacy and bribery. The people — the poor, the needy, and the sick and suffering — are offered something in exchange for their Faith; they are asked to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage". He made a strong appeal to the Protestants and Protestant doctors of Limerick, publicly to dissociate themselves as Protestants from "this stranger" and his methods. He also described what splendid results the Roman Mission had in England, where hundreds of educated and cultured Protestants had been converted, and what numbers of Protestant parsons were joining "the one true Church"; and he contrasted these results with Protestant Missions among poor Roman Catholics in Ireland; while he referred to me as "the incarnation of that detestable system known as souperism".

The Limerick Echo, commenting upon this very "sensible address", which was fully ereported, described Limerick as "a Catholic city, and its people as tolerant of the religious beliefs of others as can be found in any part of the world. Bigotry, so far as the Catholic masses are concerned, has never existed; we have no doubt when the real facts are brought home to intelligent and well-meaning Protestants, they will mark their disapproval of them".

It was a great cause for thankfulness to us that this appeal of "Father" O'Donnell's to the Protestants failed as signally as "Father" Tierney's appeal to the Confraternity had done; the Protestants remained as silent as the men of the Confraternity, and left the priests to do what best they could themselves. They had still, however, an ignorant, low-class mob they could use, chiefly composed of poor women and factory girls and boys; and the sermons these people heard greatly inflamed their religious zeal, and stirred them to make desperate efforts to hunt me out of Limerick.

On Saturday, February 9th, Mrs. Long and I, accompanied by an escort of police, paid a visit to an old friend at the Protestant Orphan Home. We passed through the city without annoyance, but the news quickly spread that we were in the Orphanage. A story was circulated that we had taken an R.C. child there, and soon a large crowd gathered outside. When we came out, this crowd paid us every attention, booing, groaning, and shouting "Dr. Long" to their full satisfaction and gratification; to us it seemed pitiful and amusing. As we went home, surrounded by police, some handy person emptied a paper bag of flour over us both; it was neatly done from a window as we passed beneath. The result was effective, and we were made most conspicuous objects in the centre of the crowd. It reminded us of the shower of rice we got one morning, but it was somewhat softer! The crowd cheered and enjoyed the joke immensely; we could not blame them, and tried to enjoy it, too.

It was market day; the city was very full, and immense crowds rushed from all sides to see the show. Many were greatly excited, some shouted: "They are done up now", "Run them out now", etc. The police in front cleared the footpath for us, while those behind did wonders in checking rough rushes from one side or the other, and in this manner we passed through the main streets. A young Protestant Englishman was so stirred with indignation at our treatment that he lost control of himself, and commenced to use his fists on some of the yelling mob. He came in for rough treatment himself, and was taken to the police barrack for protection. We had to cross the Shannon river to reach our home, and at Wellesley Bridge the police drew a cordon across the road, and thus effectually prevented the crowd from following us further. We passed home, feeling deeply thankful to our God for His protecting hand and sustaining grace during a somewhat trying experience.

THE RESIDENT MAGISTRATE AND THE R.C. BISHOP OPPOSE THE MISSION

Arising out of the hostile demonstration on Saturday a number of arrests were made, and on the following Friday, in the Petty Sessions Court, four young men were

charged by the police with disorderly conduct, and our pugilistic friend was also charged with making an assault. Mr. E.F. Hickson, R.M., presided. He was supported by six other magistrates, several of whom were members of "Father" Tierney's Confraternity. I was summoned as a witness, not for the purpose of identifying the defendants, but in order to be cross-examined and lectured by the bench, and that the whole responsibility for the disturbance in the city might be laid at my door. Nothing that I had either said or done was mentioned in court, and when the head constable, who conducted the prosecution, was asked what I had done to make myself objectionable to the crowd, he said he did not know. In reply to questions I stated that I was an agent working in connection with the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics; that I was "a proselytiser" in the true meaning of the word, and after the example of our Lord and Saviour. The court was crowded and was extremely hostile, and I received contemptuous treatment.

Mr. Hickson addressed the court in delivering the decision of the magistrates. He said: "The case against all the defendants would be dismissed in the interest of the peace of the city!" and that "the fact had been proved as to the cause of the unseemly conduct. It had been proved, not by witnesses, but by Dr. Long himself, that he was the paid emissary or agent of a certain Society called the Church Mission to Roman Catholics". He added that he "was a Protestant, and had never heard of the existence of such a Society. Dr. Long had confessed that he was a paid official coming there for the purpose of proselytism, and there was nothing that roused indignation more than that word". Further, he said: "The magistrates addressed those who were responsible for Dr. Long being in Limerick as a paid official, which he looked upon as a despicable position, and asked that they should take steps to have him removed from the city". Considerable applause greeted this decision, the priests of Rome finding great satisfaction in being able to use a Protestant magistrate as an instrument against the Protestant heretic they were doing their utmost to drive out of the city.

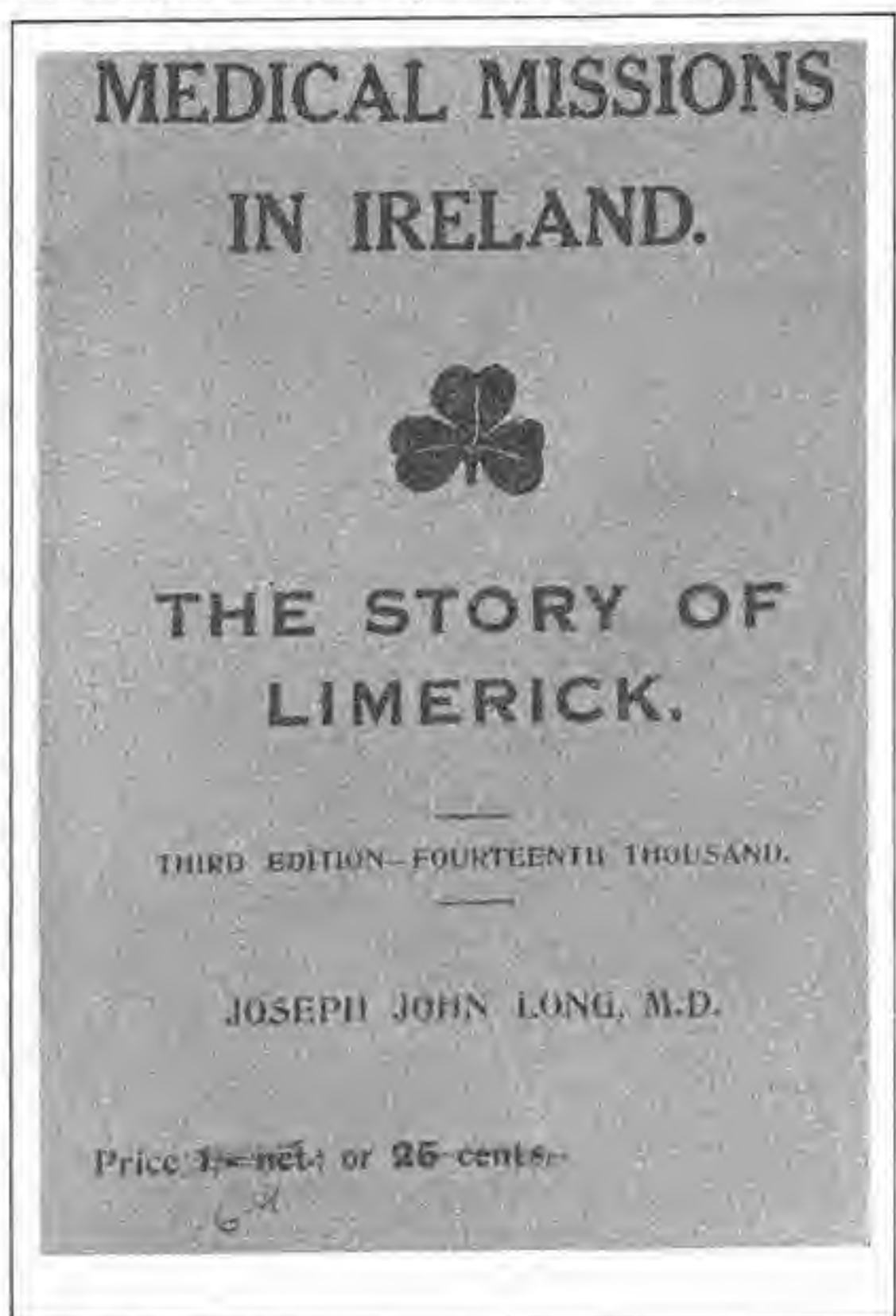
The clerical organs were jubilant, and bills headed "Long must go" were pasted along the street. The Limerick Echo announced that "no more sweeping criticism of Dr. Long's campaign could be placed on record than that given by Mr. Hickson, a Protestant magistrate; he strongly condemns the Society and its agent's work. Mr. Hickson did not mince his words, any finicking attempt on the part of Dr. Long to play with the meaning of the word 'proselytism' could scarcely be said to save him from the warm position in which the case on Friday placed the Medico-Missionary".

The Munster News also joined in the chorus for the priests, and declared that "Mr. Hickson, in his remarks yesterday, voiced the inward sentiments of all respectable non-Catholics on this question, but none of them had the courage hitherto to take the bull by the horns, and move for the expulsion of the proselytiser from the city. Now that matters have been brought to a head, and that Dr. Long's real purpose has been publicly admitted, it is to be hoped that the people of Limerick will hear no more of him or his ridiculous 'Mission to Roman Catholics'."

The following Sunday Bishop O'Dwyer's Lenten pastoral was read in all the churches of the diocese, and in it he referred to the "Protestant Medical Mission", which he regarded as an "outrageous insult". He also expressed his regret that "Father" O'Donnell's appeal to the Protestants had been treated with contempt, and said: "If anything so untoward should follow, the blame must rest on those who allow their Catholic fellow-citizens to be treated with the disrespect and insolence which this Mission implies". In a reference to this pastoral, the Munster News described our Gospel as "the Gospel of hate and greed and cant and all unrighteousness".

The temperature had steadily risen, the attack had been well supported, the civil authorities and Roman Catholic ecclesiastics had joined hands with the mob of Limerick. "despicable", shouted the one; "Outrageous insult", thundered the other. We could do nothing but quietly wait upon God till the storm should abate, as we felt assured it would. Never for a single day was the dispensary closed, and never was it empty of patients at dispensary hour. We were thankful for even the few poor people who had courage to visit us for some bodily sickness or pain, and for the opportunity of speaking to them of God's love in Christ Jesus. Again and again I received attention from the mob in one district or another. To shout "Dr. Long" was the signal for a rush from lanes and courts of excited and ignorant poor people, who believed they were doing good work by shouting, hissing, spitting, and howling, as if possessed by demons, and who regarded me as fair game. Some were in earnest, some considered it all good fun, and many looked on interested.

—————"Medical Missions in Ireland"————
The Story of Limerick, by Joseph John Long.



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THE CORPORATION PART SIX

FROM SHAWN-A-SCOUB

by Michael Hogan

Now Shawn, by pride and punch inspired,
 In a fine chamber sat retired;
 'Twas night — and he reclining lay,
 Tired from the bustle of the day.
 Servants on tip-toe thro' the rooms
 Stole, lest they'd stir the man of brooms,
 Who had so aristocratic grown,
 None dare approach the mighty drone.
 He drained his glass, and rung the bell—
 Up stairs a valet ran pell-mell,
 And timid at the door stood still,
 To know the great man's lordly will,
 "Fellow!" cried Shawn, and as he spoke,
 The gold chain on his breast he shook,
 And in his fingers, link by link,
 Dangled it till he made it clink.
 "Fellow! carry that letter there,
 To the Gov'nor of the jail, with care;
 Damn you, you bosthoon, why do you stare?
 Don't you know I am the Mayor?"
 Down stairs the trembling man withdrew,
 Insulted, muttering as he flew,
 "Mare—Mare! I know you are of course!
 The devil may change you to a horse;
 Like the old beast that Sir Dhudeen
 Rides up and down the stinking lane!"

An hour passed off — until, again
 The messenger came hurrying in,
 And at his heels Shawn's rural dame—
 The answer to his "letter" — came.
 The man retired — Shawn lock'd the door—
 Moll stared around at walls and floor,
 Then stared at Shawn in mute surprise,
 Doubting her reason and her eyes.
 "Mary!" said Shawn, "you are aware,
 I have been chosen Limerick's Mayor!"—
 "Oh, arrah! Shawn" — poor Moll replied,
 How did you get so Englified?"
 "Silence, Madam! hear me out—
 Our vulgar habits we must scout.
 And grow refined, proud and polite,
 As well as those who read and write.
 Believe me for the last few days,
 I saw more of the world's ways—
 And in the council learn'd more
 Than e'er I learn'd thro' life before.
 For dodgery 'tis the devil's school,
 And would transform the dullest fool

Into the ripest knave!"—
 "O arrah, Shawn!"—
 "Damn it, woman, call me John!
 Drop those infernal Irish terms,
 Of vulgar speech the vulgar germs,
 Learn the politeness of a lady,
 And speak good English calm and steady.
 We must forget our origin,
 And, like the hedgehog, cast our skin,
 Remember you're the Lady Mayoress,
 Of all accomplishments the heiress;
 Grace and good breeding you must show
 In every thing you say and do.
 Let nothing common be exempt,
 From your aversion and contempt;
 Walk thro' the streets erect and proud,
 Treating with scorn the plebeian crowd.
 Despise the poor, and if you will
 Give charity, even despise them still.
 In feeling let your heart be stone,
 Condemn all failings but your own.
 Be first in fashionable fame—
 Make servants tremble at your name;
 If religion touches you at all,
 Just wear it as you wear your shawl
 For fashion's sake — and then, by Job,
 You'll be a genuine Lady Scoob!"
 "But, Shawn, is that the quality's way?—
 Pardon me, John I meant to say—
 Faix, sure, it is a wonder to me,
 The gentleman you learn'd to be.
 Believe me, John, without a doubt,
 In grandeur I will beat you out:

Get me a carriage, man alive,
 And to the devil in style I'll dhrive.
 Of fashun I'll be such a sample,
 "Ladies" will follow my example,
 And soon you'll see about the town,
 More pompous Lady Scoobs than one.
 But, Shawn, how did you grow so tame?"—

—“Zouns, woman, dhrop that vulgar name
 If we call each other Shawn and Molly,
 The world will bore us for our folly.
 It may do well on a mountain-side,
 Such uncouth names to be applied;
 But in our sphere tis out of place,
 And to high manners a disgrace;
 Wherever we are — wherever we go,
 We must pretend to see and know
 Most than all others — and be sure,
 To spake the English language pure.
 If poor relations dare to claim
 Any connexion with our name,
 At their pretensions we must scoff,
 And as imposthers drive them off.
 If principle or honour may
 Arise to bar our interest’s way,
 We’ll trample it down, without a blush,
 Nor even for justice care a rush.
 If that vile farce call’d Nationality,
 Should e’er be spoken amongst us, Quolity,

We must abjure it, and detest
 Its mad abettors as a pest.
 Where’er dog, devil or calf may be
 In power to them we’ll bend our knee.
 Pride, sycophancy and effrontry,
 Are the best passports in this country.
 Now, madam to your room repair,
 Two waiting maids shall tend you there;
 I long to see my Lady Scoob
 Gilt with gold rings and silken robe;
 But when the morning sun looks down
 On this menagery of a town,
 Like Jove and Juno we will ride
 In the same chariot side by side;
 At every risk we’ll take the lead
 Of all the tinsell’d poltroon breed,
 And let them see — dear Lady mine —
 We too are glowworms, and must shine;
 Go, rest thee ’till the morrow’s dawn—
 Good night, Mary!” — “Good night, Shawn!”
 (End of the first Shawn-a-Scoob series)

A BACKGROUND OF HONESTY?

According to Garret FitzGerald, Charlie Haughey, “because of his background, had the opportunity, if he had the courage and statesmanship to grasp it, of doing what so far nobody had been able to do: get rid of the obstacle to improved North-South relations posed by Articles 2 and 3 of the constitution, which represented a claim on Northern territory” and thereby “show conclusively that we are serious about the concept of unity by consent”.

So! Nobody has been able to do it! Dear Dr. FitzGerald, would you please tell us who has tried.

The coalition government, of which Dr. FitzGerald was a member, had the obligation to try after signing the Sunningdale Agreement. Essential to that agreement was the Coalition’s declaration that there could be no change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland without the consent of a majority there. If this declaration meant anything, it was in conflict with Articles 2 and 3. When the Supreme Court, judging on Kevin Boland’s constitutional case in February, 1974, accepted the Coalition’s defence that Articles 2 and 3 were not prejudiced, effectively it was saying to all and sundry that the Sunningdale declaration was meaningless. The Coalition, therefore, was obliged by the terms of the agreement to have Articles 2 and 3 repealed. FitzGerald and Co. could have argued to the electorate that this was essential in order to ensure the continued participation of the Catholic minority’s representatives in the government of Northern Ireland. But FitzGerald and Co. made no move. The importance of their inactivity may have been glossed over in the Republic, but in the North, there was

widespread awareness of its significance. The failure of the Republic to truly recognise the validity of Northern Ireland was a contributory factor in the growing unacceptability of the Sunningdale Agreement to the unionist population, and to the consequent fall of the Executive.

Haughey, in the official communique after the meeting with Thatcher, accepts that no change can be effected in the status of Northern Ireland without the consent of its people. In effect, he has reiterated the Sunningdale Declaration, though not so long ago, Michael O’Kennedy promised in public that Fianna Fail would never repeat that declaration. And unlike the Coalition Government, Haughey has declared his acceptance of the need for Northern consent free, gratis and for nothing. Of course, as before, if it means anything, it is in conflict with Articles 2 and 3.

So what FitzGerald is saying boils down to this: “We didn’t have the guts to show we were serious by trying to repeal Articles 2 and 3, even though we could point to power-sharing as a corresponding gain; but perhaps Haughey has the guts — even though he can point to no corresponding gain. If I had his background, I might have had the guts myself. This is something I didn’t say when he took office, but there’s something to be said for the whiff of gunpowder after all”.

Haughey is unlikely to take up Garret’s suggestion. As always, what FitzGerald says is significant only as an indication of which way the wind is blowing. The fellow might be good for little else, but he’s not a bad weather cock.

'WORKERS' LIFE'

The Editorial of one of the latest issue of the Sinn Fein the Workers' Party Journal, "Workers' Life" begins thus:

"In the aftermath of the Haughey-Thatcher talks and what seems to be an understanding between the British and Irish Tories, it is incumbent on the democratic forces in Northern Ireland and the Republic to consider what options are open to them".

But having opened in this bold manner, it is too much to hope that SFWP will answer the question that they set for themselves. Apart from an incomprehensible piece of waffle about "the total destruction of political culture in Northern Ireland and the increasing alienation of the mass of the people in the Republic from the political culture there also" (you'll have to figure that out for yourself), the editorial goes on to call for working class advance in jobs, health, housing etc.

What SFWP seems to want to say is that the working class should not see the winning of the fourth green field as one of its tasks, but should concentrate on class issues — a view which Socialists Against Nationalism thoroughly and explicitly supports. But SFWP dare not say this frankly, and cannot explain why it is no longer supporting the cause that it was once fighting for through its military wing, the Official IRA.

SFWP still gives more importance to the support of its more backward elements (the republicans) than it does to the development of working-class politics. The drift away from nationalism in SFWP is welcome, but the fact that workers increasingly recognise the Northern war to be a dead end is no thanks to SFWP which remains scared to openly challenge the view of Northern Ireland that it has inherited from the Catholic nationalist bourgeoisie.

The Labour Party is supposed to be committed to a secular society and specifically to the removal of that same constitutional ban. No wonder Browne then proposed changing the name of the state to the "Irish Holy Roman and Apostolic State".

Barry Desmond, on RTE's "This Week" radio programme the following Sunday, gave the pretty lame excuse that Labour's own strategy on the matter had not yet been formulated, while Fine Gael spokesman Michael Keating could only echo the government view that there was no support among the public for such a move.

Haughey, in his BBC Panorama Interview, put forward this explanation to contradict the unionist "propaganda ploy", (as James Kelly of the Irish Independent called it) that the Catholic Church rules the politicians who rule the republic. But what effective difference does it make whether the Church rules the politicians who rule the Republic, or whether they rule the people who rule the politicians who rule the Republic? The result is the same — a Catholic state. The only difference is that it is a popularly based Catholic state, and all the stronger for that. (It also gives the politicians both a reason and an excuse for doing nothing about it.)

To get around this problem, Haughey suggested that the structure of any united Ireland should be loose enough to allow separate social legislation for the North and South. Now, the strange thing about all this is that nationalist ideology holds Ireland to be a natural social unit artificially divided by the British. So 'natural' a unit, it seems, that any 'unity' would have to provide for separate social legislation for both parts of the island. Isn't this simply an admission that Partition, far from being 'unnatural' is in fact a product of real internal social divisions in Ireland? By leaving Noel Browne standing alone, the Dail parties were admitting the inevitability of Partition and exposing the falseness of the nationalist ideology to which they all subscribe.

When Noel Browne rose in the Dail on the 3rd of June to attempt to have the constitutional ban on divorce discussed, he was left standing — alone. Not one member of the opposition supported him. Where were the new young 'radicals' of Fine Gael, and where, in particular, were the representatives of the Labour Party in the Dail?

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It has to be admitted that the main political parties in the South, Flanna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour have made not an inch of progress in persuading the people of Ulster to become part of a united Ireland. The politicians in the South today have little understanding of the people of Northern Ireland, and their reason for opposing any kind of Irish unity. If the politicians of today haven't had any success in attracting the unionists towards Irish unity, then things haven't really changed since those days of the Home Rule Movement, almost seventy years ago.

What were the views of workers in Ulster to Home Rule? Were the workers the puppets of people like Edward Carson, as so many of the half-baked socialists of today would have us believe?

Workers in Ulster had no reason to expect socially enlightened policies on matters affecting the working class in a Home Rule Ireland, and the social thinking of the Home Rule leaders, from Parnell to Griffith and Redmond gave them grounds for quite the opposite belief. The Dublin Lock-out of 1913, caused by Dublin employers' refusal to recognise the rights of trade union organisation, was ample evidence of the correctness of their intuition.

As evidence of the independence of Protestant workers'

thinking on the Home Rule question, we have the following quotation from a manifesto issued in April 1914 prior to a mass meeting in the Ulster Hall to protest against the misrepresentation of the Ulster case by the British Labour Party and to state the reasons for working class opposition to Home Rule. The manifesto was signed by officials of eight trade unions and claimed the support of the officials of fifteen more.

You have been told by the radical and socialist press ... that Ulster's resistance to Home Rule is an aristocratic plot engineered by the aristocracy for its own ends and for the suppression of the people. This is false. We, your fellow trade unionists in the North of Ireland, the only part of Ireland where labour is fully organised and articulate as in your own country, tell you this is false. Have you seen the pictures of thousands of men drilling, men like yourselves, tollers in the factories, in the shipyards, in the mills, from which we win our daily bread? ... If you have, you know that we are prepared to die fighting for our freedom, for our birthright to British citizenship under British administration. How, then, can you think that we hold our lives so cheap as to become the dupes or catspaws of any class or section of the community?